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THE

HYGEIA HOTEL

OLD POINT COMFORT, VA.

HARRISON PHOEBUS

PROPRIETOR

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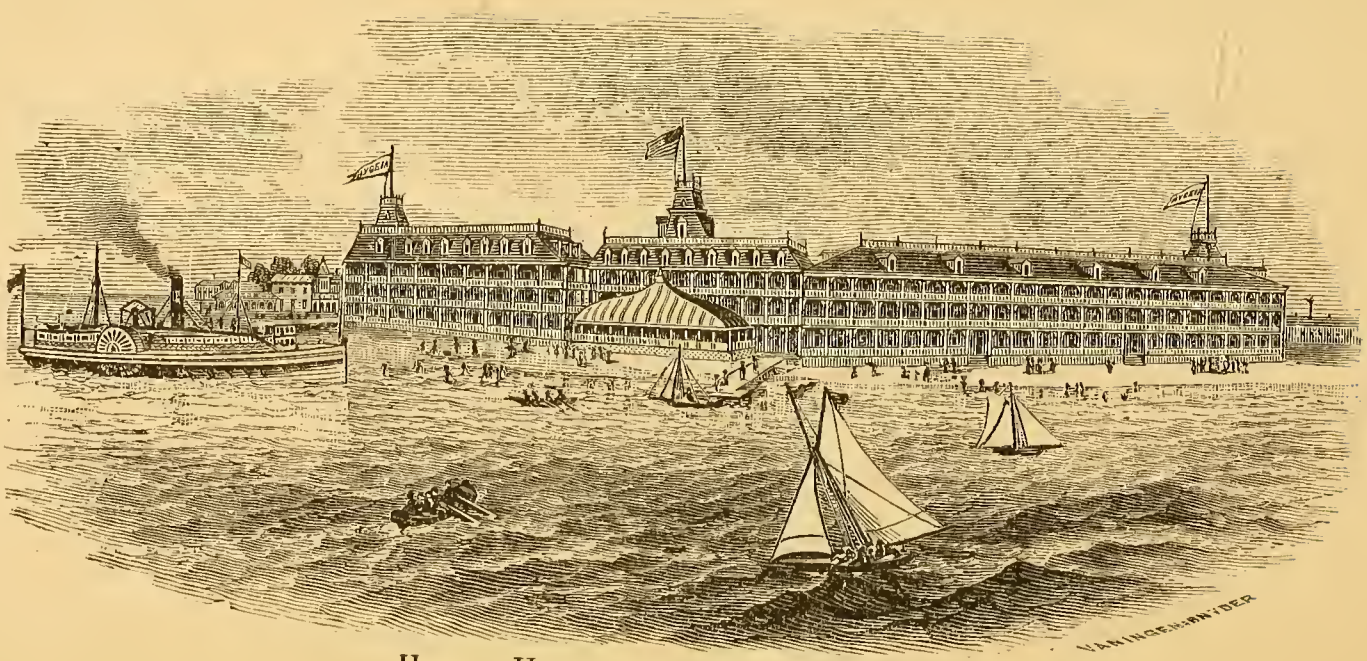
1884 Utica Ky.



HYGEIA HOTEL, OLD POINT COMFORT, VA.

FLOOR PLAN AND FRONT VIEW OF

The Hygeia Hotel, Old Point Comfort, Va.

The Hygeia Hotel is situated at Old Point Comfort, Va., immediately in front of Fortress Monroe, and fronting Chesapeake Bay and Hampton Roads. The steamboat landing is within a hundred yards of the hotel door, and the waters of the bay rising to within a few feet of the verandas, visitors are enabled to enjoy the pleasures of surf bathing without the drawback of a fatiguing ride to and from the beach.

Fortress Monroe with its famous Artillery School is within a minute's walk, and is always open to visitors. Its parade ground is beautifully shaded with live-oaks, and its ramparts offer a pleasant and breezy promenade. The daily dress parades are enlivened with the music of a fine band, and open air concerts on the parade ground are given three nights in every week. A full band is also engaged for the service of the Hotel, and the spacious pavilion, open to the sea breeze, is every evening thronged with dancers. The facilities for bathing and fishing are unsurpassed, and the neighborhood abounds in pleasant drives and places of interest. The Normal School, the Soldiers' Home, and the quaint old Town of Hampton being all within the limits of an easy drive or sail.

The climate of Old Point Comfort is unequalled for salubrity, MALARIAL FEVERS BEING ABSOLUTELY UNKNOWN. The records of the Meteorological Observatory for the past ten years show an average temperature of 60°, 74°, 76° in summer; 70°, 59°, 46° in autumn; 45°, 44°, 42° in winter; and 48°, 52°, 63° for spring.

For sleeplessness and nervousness the delicious tonic of the pure ocean air, and the lullaby of the ocean waves rolling up on the sandy beach but a few feet from the bed-room windows, are most healthful soporifics at the Hygeia.

As a resort for pleasure-seekers and invalids, and as a resting-place for tourists on their way to Florida or to the North, this House, with its accommodations for upwards of 600 people, presents inducements which certainly cannot be exceeded elsewhere.

It can be reached from New York tri-weekly, by the elegant ships of the Old Dominion Steamship Co., leaving Pier 37 North River, on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays; or, from the same city and Philadelphia daily, by rail to Baltimore, and thence by steamers of the Old Bay Line from Canton Wharf. Daily communication by the same route from Washington via Baltimore, and direct from Washington, by steamers "Jane Moseley," "Lady of the Lake," and "Geo. Leary." From Richmond the steamer "Ariel" leaves Monday, Wednesday and Friday; steamer "Schuyler," Monday and Thursday; and daily communication from Richmond and Petersburg by rail to Norfolk, thence by Bay Line steamers, which connect closely with the railways from the South and West. An almost hourly communication is maintained with Norfolk, by above named steamers, also "N. P. Banks," and "Accomack," touching on their way to and from New York, Baltimore, Washington, Richmond, Petersburg, Yorktown, Mathews, Cherrystone, Cobb's Island, Hampton, and Smithfield.

The accompanying diagram will be of service to parties desiring to secure rooms in advance of their arrival. The numeral figures refer to the numbers of apartments, and should always be stated when writing to secure rooms. The letters, A, B, C, refer to the maximum number of guests which can be accommodated in each room:

Rooms marked	A	will accommodate from	1 to 6	persons.
" "	B	" "	1 to 5	"
" "	C	" "	1 to 4	"
" "	D	" "	1 to 3	"
" "	E	" "	1 to 2	"

TERMS.

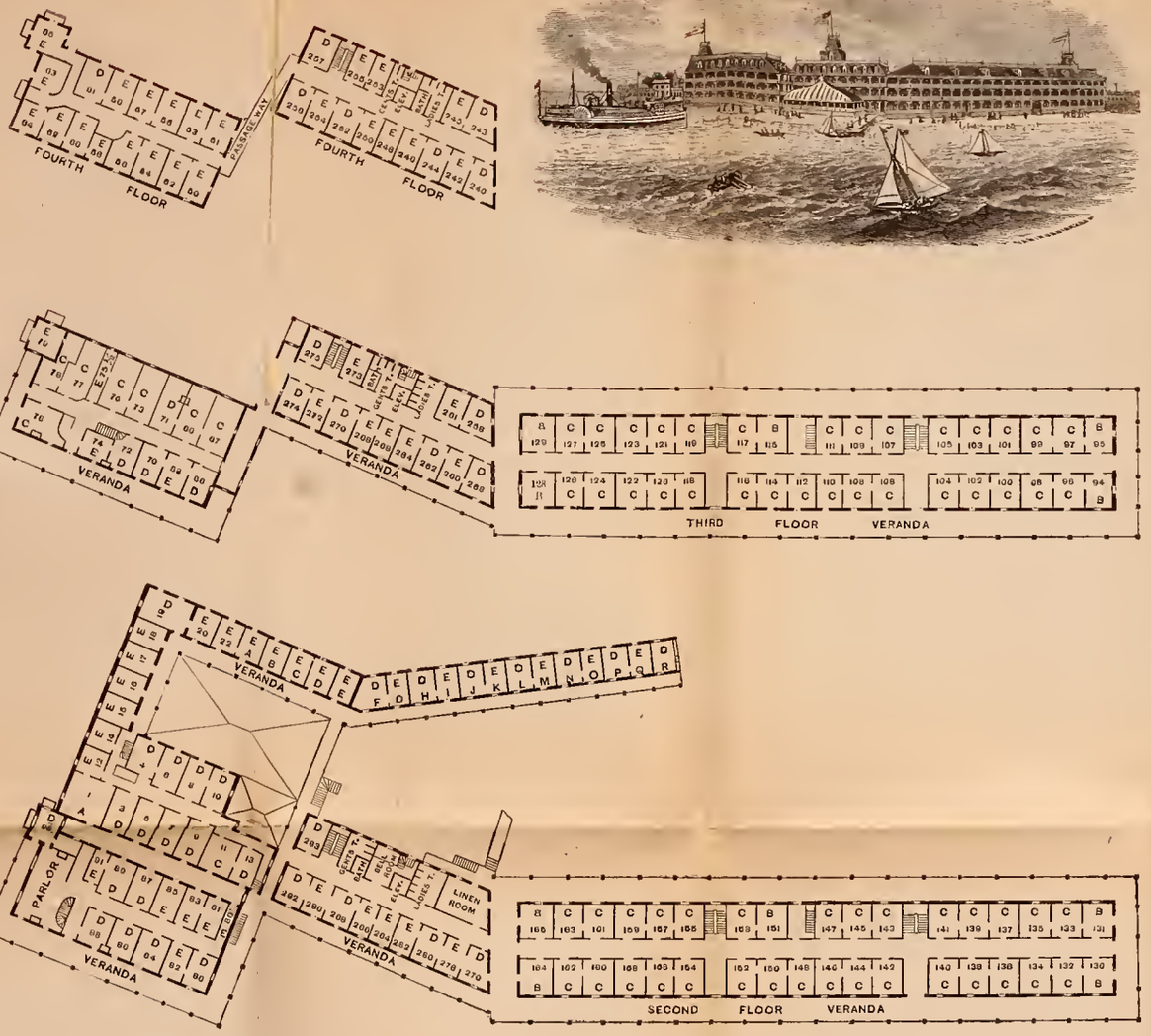
Transient,	$3 50 per day.
June and August Weekly,	$18.00.
Monthly,	$65.00.
July, Weekly	$20.00.
Monthly	$75.00.

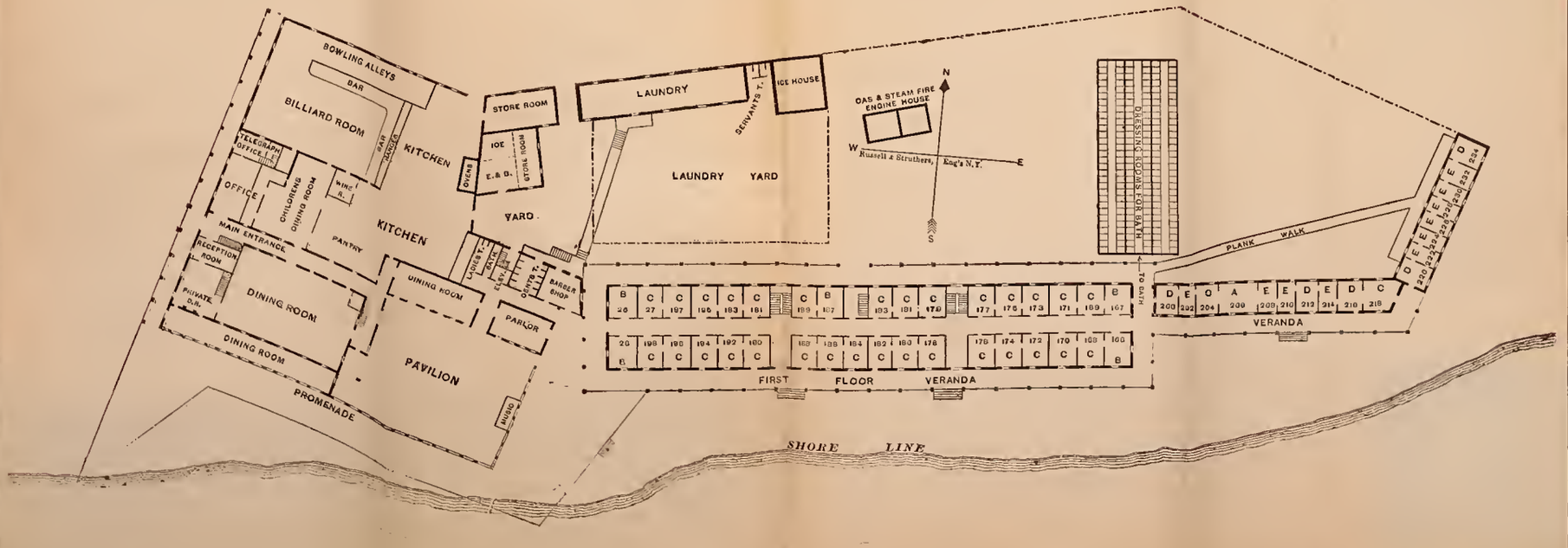
☞ Children under ten and occupying seats at children's table, half price. Servants according to the accommodations furnished, usually three-fourth rates.

When more than two persons occupy same room a liberal reduction of rates will be made, depending upon the size and location of the room, number in party, length of stay, etc.

For further information, address:

H. PHOEBUS, Proprietor.





A MONOGRAPH

ON

OLD POINT COMFORT,

VIRGINIA.

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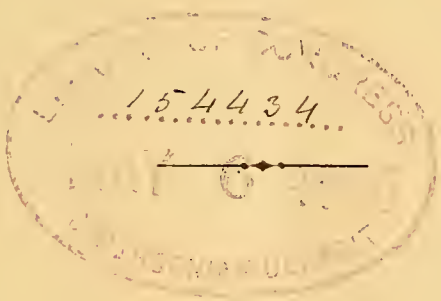

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No. 233 South Fifth Street.

[1880]

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Junc. Cy.
INDIAN TER.
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ALABAMA
GEORGIA
FLORIDA
LOUISIANA
TEXAS
VIRGINIA
WEST VIRGINIA
PENN.
MARYLAND
DEL.
NORTH CAROLINA
SOUTH CAROLINA
ATLANTIC OCEAN
MAP
of the ROUTES to the
HYGEIA HOTEL.
OLD POINT COMFORT
VIRGINIA.
Russell & Struthers, N.Y.

OLD POINT COMFORT.

NOT many miles north of Hatteras, the stormy cape dreaded of mariners, and scene of many a shipwreck, the inhospitable Atlantic coast suddenly opens, and through a broad gateway of waters, admits the voyager to a sheltered inland sea. Through this gateway, and into this inland sea, the good ship "Susan Constant" boldly steered her way, two hundred years and more ago. But let brave Captain Newport spin his yarn in his own old-fashioned way, and say how looked the goodly Chesapeake to the first English eyes that ever beheld it:—

"There is but one entrance into this country, and that is at the mouth of a very goodly bay, eighteen or twenty miles broad. The cape on the south is called Cape Henry, in honor of our most noble Prince. The land, white hilly sand, like unto the Downs, and all along the shores great plenty of pines and firs. The north cape is called Cape Charles, in honor of the worthy Duke of York. This bay lies north and south, in which the water flows nearly two hundred miles, and has a channel of one hundred and forty miles, of depth between six and fifteen fathoms, holding in breadth, for the most part, ten or fourteen miles. From the head of the bay, to the north-west, the land is mountainous, and so in a manner from thence in a south-west line; so that the farther southward, the farther off from the bay are those mountains; from which fall certain brooks, which after come to fine, principal navigable rivers."

As the goodly vessel steered from the entrance between the capes towards the west, the voyagers saw before them "a country not mountainous, nor yet low; but such pleasant plain hills and fertile valleys, one prettily crossing another, and watered so conveniently with fresh brooks, and springs not less commodious than delightful. The first of these delightful and navigable rivers, on the west side the bay, is called Powhattan, on account of the name of a principal country that lies upon it. It falls from rocks far west, in a country inhabited by a nation called Monacans. This river is enriched with many goodly brooks, among which is the brook of Chesapeak."

Towards the mouth of this fair river Powhattan the voyagers directed their course; and as the setting sun tinged the western sky with gold, they furled their weary sails, and cast anchor in the broad roadstead, now known to every mariner that sails the sea as Hampton Roads.

How they pursued their explorations, and found their way to the mighty falls of the great river Powhatan,—would they could have left it its old poetic name, commemorative of its Indian sovereign,—how they negotiated, and feasted, and trafficked with the natives, buying corn and cedar-wood, and feasting on the luscious fish and oysters whose descendants tickle our palates to this day, these things are written in the narrative of that seventeenth century hero, John Smith, soldier, sailor, diplomatist, discoverer, and Heaven only knows what beside. Pass we to another scene in the history of the infant colony.

In July, 1608, Captain John Smith, with a select party of adventurers, started in an open boat on a voyage of exploration of the shores of Chesapeake Bay. Like men of wisdom, before striking out into the broad waters of the bay, they tarried for a space at Hampton, then called Kecoughtan, which, even at that early day, was noted for its fish and oysters, and celebrated for its hospitality. How the unaccustomed palates of the adventurers must have been tickled by their first taste of shad, and with what surpassing gusto they must have reveled over their first dish of soft crabs!

The modern visitor to this locality, Hampton, will have little trouble in locating the site of the Indian village where Smith and his companions were so hospitably entertained: "Kecoughtan contains about eighteen houses, pleasantly situated upon three acres of ground, upon a plain half environed with a great bay of the great river, the other part with a bay of another river, with a little isle, fit for a castle, in the mouth thereof."

After resting and refreshing themselves for a space at Kecoughtan, the explorers proceeded on their way, and traced the western shore of the great bay as far as the entrance to the Piankatank river. But here misfortune overtook them. A mighty storm arose, with thunder, vivid lightning, and furious rain. In their open shallop they were exposed to the full force of the blast, and sought in vain to stem its fury, and find their way into some convenient harbor. Unable to ride at anchor, or to face the wind, they put their frail bark before it, and, guided by occasional glimpses of the land, caught by the fitful glare of the lightning, they scudded to the southward. York river was passed, and still the gale pursued them; Back river gave no shelter, and the storm was ever at their heels: until at last they reached the sandy spit of land which thrust itself out into the entrance of the James, and rounding to under its lee, found shelter from the gale, and named the place, in very thankfulness of heart, POINT COMFORT.

And a point of comfort it has been indeed to many a goodly vessel since that day. Hither, when the fierce east wind lashes the Atlantic into fury, the white-winged coasting schooners flee by scores for shelter, and bide the time when gentle westerly breezes shall woo them forth, and encourage them upon their way. Hither come the merchant ships of every nation and from every port, as to a convenient resting-place, whence they can notify their arrivals and receive orders for their final destinations. Here rendezvoused the ships which brought from England the welcome succors to the starving colony at Jamestown. Here, during the struggle for American Independence, the fleet of France rode proudly

at their anchors, and made final preparation for their share in that campaign which terminated so gloriously in the surrender of Cornwallis at Yorktown. And hither, after the signal repulse of their attack on Norfolk, the British fleet repaired in 1813, and rested tranquilly at anchor, while their armed boats carried fire, sword, and rapine into the peaceful and defenceless town of Hampton.

Old Point Comfort, the adjective "old" having been added to its original designation to distinguish it from its sister shelter, New Point Comfort, higher up the bay, is situated about sixteen miles from Norfolk, and two and a half miles from the old and picturesque town of Hampton. It is formed by a sandy spit or point of land, which thrusts itself from the main-land on the western side of Chesapeake Bay, southwardly into the James, contracting the mouth of the river into a narrow channel, through which the tide ebbs and flows with considerable velocity and force. Commanding, as it does, the entrance to the great water highway of Virginia, its importance in a military point of view was early recognized, and an act was procured to be passed by the legislature of the State of Virginia, ceding it to the United States Government, to be used as the site of a military post. General Simon Bernard, a foreign engineer officer of eminence, who entered the American service soon after the close of the war of 1812, was employed to design the fortifications, and in the year 1817 the ground plan was traced, and the work of erecting FORTRESS MONROE commenced.

The general plan of this celebrated work is that of an irregular hexagon, two sides of which command the water frontages, while four look out upon the land. On the land sides the ramparts are solid, with the exception of some of the flanks, which are casemated, but on the sides towards the water the armament consists of two tiers of guns, one casemated, and one *en barbette*. A broad moat, in which the tide rises to a height of eight feet at high water, surrounds the entire structure, and is crossed by wooden bridges leading from the main entrance, and the different sally-ports; while water batteries and other outworks are added to the defenses of the water front. The ramparts rise to a height of seventeen feet above high water.

The interior of the fortress is conveniently laid out with broad and partially-shaded walks. Numerous live-oaks are planted about the parade-ground and elsewhere, and a superstition prevails among the inhabitants of Old Point Comfort, to which all well-disposed visitors are expected to subscribe, that the northern rampart of Fortress Monroe marks the limit north of which the live-oak has never grown, and never may, shall, or can grow in future. A pretty little chapel, aptly christened the Church of the Centurion, stands near the parade-ground, and a chaplain being permanently stationed at the post, the garrison and visitors enjoy the privileges of divine service every Sunday.

It was not until the outbreak of the late civil war, however, that the true importance of Fortress Monroe became manifest, not only as a defensive work, but as a base and starting-point for offensive operations. It is scarcely too much to say, that without the possession of this important post, the armies of the United States would never have been

able to hold their own. Here, at the outset of the Peninsular campaign, McClellan's army assembled, and hither they returned when foiled in their attempt upon the capital of the Confederacy. In Hampton Roads, beneath the sheltering guns of Fortress Monroe, the great armada rendezvoused and completed its preparations for the attack on Hatteras Inlet. From hence Burnside's army sailed in August, 1862, to engage in the disastrous campaign of the Rappahannock; and here, throughout the entire war, was the permanent base of operations, the storehouse of supplies, for the forces operating by land and by water.

To the curious student of the naval history of the United States, Old Point Comfort must ever possess peculiarly interesting associations. In the adjacent waters occurred, and from its beach was witnessed, the first encounter between iron-armored vessels of war. In the early afternoon of March 7th, 1862, the Union fleet lying at anchor, near Newport News, about six miles from Fortress Monroe, beheld with astonishment a nondescript vessel propelled by steam, issuing from the mouth of the Elizabeth river, and heading directly towards them, with evident hostile intentions. Contemptuously disregarding a broadside delivered at point-blank range by the frigate Congress, the monster headed directly for the frigate Cumberland, and, amidst a shower of missiles which rebounded harmlessly from her iron covering, she hurled herself fair upon the Union ship, crushing in her sides like paper, with the shock. There were heavy hearts at Old Point Comfort that night, and all looked anxiously for the morrow, dreading the reappearance of the apparently invincible Confederate monster. But when at dawn of day the Merrimac, or, according to her new baptism, the Virginia, reappeared, there lay in Hampton Roads awaiting her, what seemed to be a floating raft, with a turret rising from her centre. It was the world-famous Monitor, just completed by her inventor, and arrived from New York the night previous.

The fight which ensued has been described by a thousand pens, in every language spoken of civilized man. The Virginia had met her match; and, although not seriously disabled, the wonderful expectations that had been formed by her projectors were forever dispelled, and her offensive career suddenly ended when the evacuation of Norfolk was determined on by the Confederate leaders. A vain attempt was made to lighten her sufficiently to enable her to ascend the James river, where she might have been serviceable in aiding the defense of Richmond; but this proving futile, she was run ashore, abandoned by her crew, and blown up. With her destruction ended the only serious attempt made to oust from the United States Government the possession of Fortress Monroe during the entire war. Her antagonist survived her less than a year; and on the 11th of December, 1862, a little more than nine months after the famous battle, the Monitor went down in a gale of wind off Cape Hatteras.

For years before the war Old Point Comfort had been celebrated as a watering-place. The singular salubrity of its location, malarial fevers being totally unknown, assured it a wide celebrity as a place of residence during the heated summer months. The mildness of the climate also aided to produce the same result. From the broad Atlantic the winds, tem-

pered with the salt exhalations of the sea, sweep towards it, bearing coolness and tonic invigoration upon their wings. The temperature in summer ranges between sixty and seventy-six degrees, and the nights are few when a bed covering is not found an agreeable necessity of repose. The gentry of the upper country flocked hither during the summer months, to enjoy the unaccustomed luxuries of sea bathing and fishing; its proximity to an important garrisoned post, furnished with an enduring nucleus of refined and educated society, and the broad piazzas of the old Hygeia Hotel resounded through many a lengthened summer with the merry laughter of Baltimore, Richmond, and Southern belles, or faintly echoed to the grave deliberations of statesmen thither come in quest, at once, of rest and consultation.

The outbreak of the war which wrought so many changes, interposed an abrupt interruption to the career of Old Point Comfort as a resort of pleasure. Military necessity demanded the demolition of the hotel building, which interfered materially with the range of the guns of the fortress; and even had this not been the case, the hosts of quondam pleasure-seekers had other and sterner duties to perform. The squires of dames were scattered far and wide; and the youths who in by-gone seasons had played their parts in quadrille or cotillion, now sternly confronted each other on the field of battle, or yielded up their lives at the sacred call of duty. The belles, whose presence had lent life and grace to the ball-room, now cheerfully busied themselves in those feminine labors wherewith woman ever strives to soften warlike horrors; and the statesmen had now ample and absorbing occupation in guiding the counsels of the contending governments. Grim-visaged war dropped down its sable curtain upon the theatre of pleasure: and for long weary years Old Point Comfort was known and regarded only as an important military post in possession of the United States.

Nor was it until several years after the return of peace that the Hygeia Hotel arose from its ashes, and Old Point Comfort re-asserted its position as one of the foremost watering-places of the Atlantic coast. Its old clientage was largely scattered and dispersed; a new generation had arisen, which knew it only traditionally, as a place to which pleasure-seekers used to resort in *ante bellum* days; and time was required for the public to re-discover and appreciate its advantages. But, under the liberal and energetic management of the present proprietor of the hotel, these difficulties were gradually overcome. Each successive year witnessed an increasing influx of visitors. The modest building which had at first offered ample accommodations, required successive enlargements and additions; until at the present time a substantial edifice fronts the bay, with comfortable quarters for over six hundred guests, and fitted with every improvement which modern ingenuity has devised to add to the comfort of hotel life.

Let us visit the place ourselves, and see with our own eyes the changes that have occurred since that time, scarcely two hundred and fifty years agone, when bold John Smith and his companions feasted on oysters at Kecoughtan, and fled for shelter from the angry Chesapeake to the bay behind the point. Let us suppose ourselves to have started from Baltimore

or Washington, and enjoyed a refreshing night's rest on one of the steamboats that ply between those cities and Norfolk.

It is a lovely June morning when we leave our state-rooms and step out on deck to catch a whiff of the fresh, delightful morning air. Unruffled as a summer lake, the tranquil Chesapeake lies stretched before us, the quiet calm of its surface broken only by the rush of the swift steamer as she cleaves her onward way. To our right, and parallel with our steamer's course, extends that self-same shore which greeted Newport's sea-weary eyes, and along which Smith's open boat was wildly driven by the pursuing tempest. To the left, the light-house on Cape Charles shows like a pillar beneath the rising sun, while beyond it stretches the broad Atlantic. A fleet of white-winged sloops and schooners is about us, their idle sails swinging to the gentle motion of the waters, as if impatient for the wind; while further out, a stately ship, with all sail set, has caught the ocean breeze, and moves like a thing of life. And right ahead, where still another coast extends from right to left, we catch sight of an opening in the land, and see the granite walls and turf-covered ramparts of the fortress, and the broad balconies of the Hygeia. As we draw nearer, the gap in the land widens, and the expanse of Hampton Roads is before us. A perfect fleet of vessels is at anchor. A stately frigate, whose broad pennant marks her as a flagship, lies in mid-channel, like a watch-dog before the door it is his duty to guard. Our approach has been seen from her decks, and already a boat manned by sturdy rowers is pulling for the shore to get the mail we bring. Behind her lies a clipper bark, deep laden with coffee from Rio Janeiro, awaiting orders from her owners directing her to what port she must repair to discharge her cargo. Near by, an English ship, whose shattered foremast betokens that she has come hither in distress, is waiting for the tug that has been sent to tow her to Norfolk, Richmond, or Baltimore for repairs. A comely brigantine, with staves from Norfolk to Barbadoes comes next; and beyond her, and on every side, lie ships and barks and brigs and schooners, inward and outward bound, deep laden and light, in what, to an unpractised landsman's eye, appears inextricable confusion.

A strong flood-tide is running, compelling us to do that which the mariner technically denominates to round to; the translated significance of which phrase is, that we must run somewhat past our destination, describe a half circle, and approach the wharf with our bows pointing against the tide. All of which is accurately and scientifically done, the lines are thrown out, the usual performance upon the engineer's bell ensues, and we are at liberty to step ashore, if not absolutely upon the classic shore of Old Point Comfort, at least upon the firm and solid Government wharf leading thereto.

And, by the way, it is worth noting, the difference between our reception here, and that we have been accustomed to meet elsewhere in our travels. At another watering-place, we should have been met by a crowd of vociferous hackmen, bawling hotel porters, and other terrible creatures whose pursuit in life is to lie in wait for the unwary traveler. But, wonder of wonders! at this place not so much as a vender of peanuts importunes us to spend our money. A couple or more of blue-coated sentries

are stationed at the wharf-head: a group of officers are chatting together, or may be watching for the debarkation of some expected friends. A solitary porter, sable, respectful, voiceless save when spoken to, stands ready with a hand truck to take our luggage; and, consigning our chattels to the care of this reconstructed African, we stand watching until the boat's short stay alongside the wharf is concluded, and then saunter leisurely up to the hotel. Right at the end of the wharf stands our hostelry, so close that from the planking of the pier to the flooring of the verandah one may step without even putting foot upon the ground. Of course, like experienced and provident travelers, we have telegraphed in advance of our coming to secure our rooms; the efficient hotel clerk consigns us without parley to the guidance of an attendant; and, following this sable Mercury along corridors and up the smooth working elevator, we come at length to our room.

Now praised be Phœbus, god of the gilded bow and monarch of the rising sun! Literally, and in very fact, let us return thanks to him, for know that our host of the Hygeia is of his family, and rejoices in his name. Heaven bless thee, Phœbus, and reward thee for thy kindly forethought for our comfort! Our room fronts upon the bay, and through the open window we look out upon its animated surface, while the hoarse sullen murmur of the surf rises to our ears from the beach below, and from afar there reaches us the musical clank—clank—of the windlass of a ship weighing anchor, tempered by the half-melancholy minor chant of the sailors as they heave upon their bars.

And now that we have seen our room, and watched the stowing away of our belongings, let us descend once more, and see what manner of place this is about us.

In the first place, know that we are under a military despotism here. Those blue-coated sentries, whom we saw posted on the wharf what time we landed, were representatives of the army of occupation which holds Old Point Comfort in subjection. Here the only local law-giver is the general commanding the post; and, oh blessed thought! there be no municipal elections, and no mass meetings! An altogether lovely place to live in, isn't it? and by the meditative look of your expressive features I can see that you are thinking whether it mightn't be worth while to buy an acre or two of land hereabouts, and build a cottage for your summer residence. Deluded soul, that dreams of bliss! not all the millions of Vanderbilt or Astor would avail to purchase the fee simple of a single rood of this sandy soil; and to enable you to erect even the most modest of cottages, a special bill must be introduced into the Congress of your common country, must be referred to appropriate committees, reported on, read various times, passed, and approved by the chief Executive. That done, you may put your house in order; but in the meantime, you'll find the Hygeia a comfortable place to stop at.

Past the site of the hotel, a smooth shell-road runs from the wharf, connecting Old Point Comfort with the State of Virginia, and the continent generally. And as we have some hours to while away before dinner, and must be on hand this afternoon and evening for the artillery practice, the dress parade, and the hotel hop, suppose we charter a buggy and start out

upon a tour of exploration? We drive through the little town of official and privileged residences, past the gray walls of the fortress, and are speedily in the open country.

This broad expanse of water, spanned by a substantial bridge, rejoices in the poetic appellation of Mill Creek, and serves to separate Old Point Comfort from the county of Elizabeth City which lies beyond a fringe of pleasant-looking residences borders the farther shore, and the sanctity of the point is guarded, and the straying of the enlisted men of the garrison thereof prevented, by a guard-house, with its proper quota of sentinels, midway across the bridge.

The worthy citizens of Elizabeth City county have had the good taste and wisdom to abolish fences; and as we drive along we see the crops growing down to the very edge of the roadside; the lusty corn, luxuriating in the summer sun, the thickly-headed broom corn, the wheat fast ripening for the harvest, with interlying meadows, and fields of potatoes and other "trucks." The gateway of the Soldiers' Home invites us to the left; and turning in that direction, we enter upon a firm and well-built road which leads directly to the doors of the institution.

It would be difficult to imagine a pleasanter retreat than this for a battered and worn-out campaigner. Right in front of us, stretching away to the southward, is the broad expanse of Hampton Roads, dotted and animated with hundreds of vessels of all sizes, from the tiny canoe to the stately ocean steamer. The grounds that front the water are laid out in pleasant walks that wind among parterres of flowers dotted with tasteful statuary and other ornaments; while in the midst a brass field-piece, bright as the risen sun, marks the military character of the place, and sends its thunder echoing across the bay each morning and each evening. Never were veterans more tenderly cared for than here; billiard-tables, bowling-alleys, even a theatre, are provided for their amusement; and under the efficient guardianship of Captain Woodfin, the present governor, their every want appears to be anticipated. A police force, composed of inmates of the house, patrols the grounds, and neatness, order, and thoughtful provision for every possible necessity are everywhere apparent.

But our buggy is in waiting, and the morning wanes apace. A few minutes' drive brings us to an establishment of a widely different character. We have left the home provided for men who can no longer fight the battle of life for themselves; and now approach an institution intended to instruct its inmates in methods of self-support and public usefulness. The Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute is before us, with its quaint Byzantine ordered buildings, its busy crowd of pupils, and its general scholastic air of order and repose.

Whatever may be thought of the capacity for mental improvement of the negro race,—and that there are two sides to the question no candid spirit will deny,—it must be admitted that at this institution, under the excellent superintendence of General Armstrong, the labor of providing for them teachers of their own race is admirably carried out. Not only are the pupils of the institute instructed in mere scholastic learning, but workshops, where various trades and handicrafts can be acquired, are carried on for their benefit; and the farm attached to the college affords

practical instruction in the useful art of agriculture. A printing office, whence very creditable work is turned out, is one of the features of the place, and a twelve-page periodical here published has an extensive and deserved circulation.

The African is not the only race to which the Hampton Normal Institute extends its benefits. About seventy of those other wards of the nation, the red men of the plains, are here domiciled to learn the self-supporting virtues of civilization. The officers of the college speak in high terms of the proficiency of these strange pupils; and it is proposed, hereafter, to maintain a certain permanent number here, replacing those whose education is completed by new and untaught members of the various tribes. The experiment, at all events, is worth trying, and time alone can show how far it may be destined to succeed.

But further examination of this seat of learning must for the present be postponed; and if you are wise in your generation, you will consecrate a day to a visit hitherward, and study its workings and its management exhaustively. Just now we're bound for Hampton; and if we would visit that quaint old town this morning, and be back by dinner-time to the hotel, it behooves us, in the expressive vernacular of the parts adjacent hereto, to "hump ourselves," or we shall be too late. Another bridge, that spans the creek of Hampton, has to be crossed; and passing by some fine suburban residences, we find ourselves in the streets of the town that stands upon the spot where bold John Smith ate oysters and made merry with his hospitable aboriginal entertainers.

The great attraction of the city, which all good pilgrims are enjoined to visit, is its venerable church; and while we dutifully progress thitherward, let me tell you, out of the chronicles of Virginia, something about the history of the old town through which we are passing.

Enumerating the tributaries of the lower James, the garrulous and precise Capt. Smith remarks in his *True Relations*: "From the south there falls into it: first the pleasant river of Apomatuck; next, more to the east, are two small rivers; a little farther are inhabitants of Warra-Koyac; then the river of Nansamund and lastly the brook Chesapeack. From the north side is the river Chickahamania, the back river of Jamestown; another by the Cedar Isle where we lived ten weeks upon oysters; and then a convenient harbor for fisher boats at *Kecoughtan*, that so turneth itself into bays and creeks; it makes that place very pleasant to inhabit; their cornfields being girded there in a manner as peninsulas." How accurate is this description of old Kecoughtan will be evident to any one who may take the trouble to explore the numerous little bays and inlets that indent the shores of Hampton creek.

The town of Hampton was settled by the English as early as 1610, although its modern name was not bestowed upon it until a much later period. Its chief value to the early colonist was as a base of supplies and port of departure for their expeditions up the York, Rappahannock, Potomac, and other rivers of the Chesapeake. In 1634 it was erected into a parish under the incumbency of the Rev. Mr. Bucke, for whom a church was erected by the settlers. This church, falling into decay, was replaced between the years 1660 and 1667 by the present church of St. John's.

In 1705, the settlement was incorporated into a town under the name of Hampton; and in the later colonial days was a place of some importance for the shipment of produce and the importation of British goods and manufactures. One of the earliest engagements of the Revolutionary war was the successful defense of the town by the inhabitants, aided by a rifle company, against the boats of a British fleet, in October, 1775. In 1813 the town was less fortunate, being attacked by Admiral Cockburn and Sir Sidney Beckwith with a flotilla of boats, and captured after a short but decisive action. On this occasion the unhappy place was given up to pillage, and the inhabitants who had been unable to flee were subjected to most shameful indignities and barbarities. Even the British commander was moved to indignation at the excesses he was unable to prevent; and, answering a congratulatory letter from his commanding general at Norfolk, deprecated all praises of his achievement, with the forcible and striking remark, "Worthless is the laurel that is steeped in woman's tears."

A less barbarous but almost equally unhappy fate overtook the town in the early part of the late war; when the entire place, save only one solitary dwelling, was burned to ashes.

The old church which we are about to visit, though erected in the seventeenth century, was thoroughly repaired and reconsecrated in 1830. The records of its vestry extend back to 1751, and the church itself, with its monuments and mementoes of the past, is one of the most interesting relics now extant of colonial times and manners.

So much for old Kecoughtan and modern Hampton. The westering sun warns us that we have stayed the full limit of our time, and must hurry homeward. Evidently our intelligent steed is of the same opinion; for as he turns into the well-known Old Point road, his pace quickens as he thinks of coming oats; and save that by special legal ordinance he is perforce compelled to cross the bridges at a walk, he keeps his rapid gait until the hospitable doors of our hotel are once more before us.

A bountiful dinner, in which a prominent part is played by a noble sheepshead, who but this morning was swimming tranquilly about, unconscious of his coming doom, restores our flickering energies, and at the same time induces in us that placid, tranquil frame of mind, when all exertion is a bore, and satisfied nature longs only for repose and contemplation. So, instead of walking along the beach to see the target-firing, suppose we plant ourselves at the end of one of the upper verandas of the hotel, and accomplish the same object with less fatigue and more comfort? You smoke? Ah, well, at least you won't object to my enjoying the luxury of a cigar; and while you watch the firing, and speculate upon the chances of the target being struck next time, I can pour into your thirsty soul a little more information for its refreshment.

This artillery firing, at which you are looking with so much interest, is no idle performance, no mere occasional practice with the guns, such as might perhaps be witnessed at some remote frontier post; but an appointed portion of a settled system of education. For here at Fortress Monroe is the celebrated Artillery School, of which perhaps you have already heard, which all artillery officers of the United States army, in succession, are

ordered to attend for a space of two years. As to the methods and merits of the plan of instruction, I can tell you very little, and even that little had better be left unsaid; lest some authority and expert in the technicalities of gunnery fall foul of my modest exposition, and overwhelm me with his ridicule. But of one thing I can assure you, without fear of contradiction; the school adds mightily to the attractions of Old Point Comfort for visitors, since it leads to the stationing here of some fifty army officers, who form no inconsiderable or unwelcome addition to the society congregated at the Hygeia.

Thus in quiet conversation slips the afternoon away, until the hour comes for dress parade inside the Fortress, of course we're going to the dress parade. To be at Old Point Comfort and not attend it, would be to argue ourselves misanthropical, and altogether unfit for the society of our species; and so of course we join the crowd that passes from the hotel along the wooden sidewalk leading to the nearest postern. Crossing the moat, we enter through the sentried gate, and find ourselves upon the broad road that sweeps around the interior foot of the ramparts. Were it not for the blue-coats about us, we might almost fancy ourselves in a thriving, peaceful village, rather than an historic fortress. About us to the left, are dotted houses of various styles and sizes, many of them with clustering vines embowering them, and shade trees sheltering their porches; while to the right extends what seems to be a street of white-fronted dwellings, set close together, and singularly alike in their appearance; but which really is a line of casemates, converted into peaceful-looking dwellings for the officers.

As we stroll, the band strikes up from the parade-ground, and, quickening our pace, we station ourselves beneath one of the sturdy live-oaks encircling the *campus*, and watch the evolutions. "All present, or accounted for," proclaims the adjutant; the commanding officer puts the troops through a brief drill; the officers assemble, advance and salute; the band strikes up a lively march, and the enlisted men move off in order to their barracks, and so the dress parade is over for to-day.

And now the hour is drawing near when you shall see Old Point Comfort at its very brightest, and rejoice exceedingly to think you came. For now supper is over, and the time approaches for the hop. Saw you ever a finer ball-room in your life? A spacious and lofty pavilion, with two sides open to the sea, it combines the two great requisites of ample room, and cool, fresh, ever-changing air. The waxed floor shines like a mirror, and as the band strikes up the Blue Danube, and the twirling waltzers fill the room, the fever of Terpsichore attacks you also, and you cast an anxious glance around, to see if haply you may not recognize some fair being who may grace you as a partner. The population of the Point, guests, residents and all, are here assembled, and in the midst of the merry making. A sonorous whistle announces the approach of a steamer from Norfolk, with a band of excursionists on board, on pleasure bent, to swell the joyous crowd. Play, music! Dance, lightsome feet and happy hearts! The gentle south wind that breathes through the open casements, fresh from the bay, is like an encouraging kiss from heaven upon the brow, and never for an instant chills the ardor of the dancers.

Outside the ball-room runs a broad and well-floored breakwater, rising almost directly from the sea; and thither, with your good leave, we will draw our chairs, and listen to the music and look out upon the night, at one and the same time. Tell me now, if ever in your life you experienced anything more enjoyable. The murmur of the waves, as they kiss the sandy beach beneath your feet, mingles harmoniously with the music from the ball-room. The breeze that fans your cheek has never a touch of fever upon its wings; the stars are smiling lovingly overhead; and from the east, where the waning moon rises above the horizon, a golden pathway comes across the waters, and dances gently to the movement of the waves. On the one side is all the life and animation of the busy dancers; on the other, the quiet beauty, and the hushed solemnity of sea and sky by night. Confess, now, that a single evening's enjoyment such as this is worth coming to Old Point Comfort to experience.

And so the evening fades into night. One by one the dancers have dropped off and dispersed to their various places of repose; even the band—to use a justifiable piece of slang—has "played out;" and we find ourselves alone upon the breakwater beside the sounding beach.

Our day at Old Point Comfort is ended; and although we have by no means exhausted the sights and pleasures of the locality, I shall leave you to admire and discover them for yourself, and inflict my society upon you no longer. You may—an if you will,—commence the day to-morrow with a plunge into the healthful salt water in front of the hotel. You may cross the strait and explore the mazes of the unfinished, useless, costly fort that crowns the artificial island of the Rip Raps. Or if your tastes be nautical or piscatorial, the whole expanse of Hampton Roads and of the lordly Chesapeake is all before you, with staunch and swift sailing-boats at your command; and at your pleasure you may seek to woo a sheepshead to your hook for dinner, or follow the footsteps of Smith and his companions among the neighboring creeks and bays. And when the evening falls around you once again, if you be at all romantically inclined, and can secure a fitting companion, let me whisper in your ear that there are few places more adapted for a romantic moonlight stroll, than the turf-covered ramparts of Fortress Monroe.

With which parting hint, the present writer leaves you to your own devices, and bids you lovingly adieu.

TESTIMONIALS.

That visitors may safely seek Old Point Comfort as a health resort at all seasons of the year, I submit the following letters of Drs. Jarvis, Archer, Shield, Hope, Mallory, Simpkins, and Vaughan, and of James S. French, Esq. (who for ten years was the proprietor of the old Hygeia Hotel), which are addressed to Joseph Segar, Esq., who was for many years, prior to the war, proprietor of the hotel here; and also those of Joseph R. Smith, Surgeon U. S. A., and G. William Semple, M. D., of Hampton, Va. While all but the last two were written years before I became proprietor of the Hygeia Hotel, they are none the less valuable and interesting to those who desire information concerning this locality.

FORT MONROE, Va., February 11th, 1857.

MY DEAR SIR:—I acknowledge the receipt of your letter of yesterday, asking my opinion as to the "character of Old Point Comfort for health, and particularly as to its exemption from diseases of a bilious character."

A residence of three years at Old Point Comfort as the surgeon of this post enables me to bear full testimony to its well-known salubrity, and the reputation it has heretofore enjoyed in its exemption from the ordinary forms of disease, especially those of a malarial or febrile nature usually prevailing during the spring or autumnal months in other sections of the country and neighborhood.

The records of the military hospital for years past further confirm my own experience, not only in this fortunate exemption from that class of disease ordinarily arising from malaria, but in the less frequency as well as diminished severity of those epidemics that have from time to time prevailed in almost every portion of our country.

I remain yours, very respectfully,

N. S. JARVIS, M. D., Surgeon U. S. A.

JOSEPH SEGAR, Esq., Roseland, Va.

RICHMOND, August 7th, 1856.

MY DEAR SIR:—Your favor, requesting my opinion as to the general healthiness of Old Point Comfort, is received, and I hasten to reply.

I resided at Old Point, as Post Surgeon and as Physician, upwards of twenty years, and I have no hesitation in saying that there are few, if any, localities in the United States more healthy at all seasons of the year.

I know of no place more exempt from bilious diseases, and I have never known a case of intermittent fever to originate there.

In fine, I consider visitors from any climate as safe from disease at Old Point Comfort during the autumn months as they would be in the mountains, or anywhere at the North.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

R. ARCHER.

HAMPTON, August 23d, 1856.

DEAR SIR :—Yours of yesterday's date, asking my opinion of the health of Old Point Comfort, is before me.

I have been practising medicine in Hampton and Old Point for fifteen years, and consider it as healthy a place as any I know on the face of the earth. I do not remember having seen there a case of remittent or intermittent fever that was not contracted elsewhere. Very respectfully,

R. S. SHIELD.

JOSEPH SEGAR, ESQ., Hygeia Hotel.

HAMPTON, August 22d, 1856.

MY DEAR SIR :—In reply to your queries contained in your note of the 7th inst., it gives me pleasure to state that, in my opinion, Old Point Comfort is as healthy a locality as any on the Atlantic coast.

Persons from any part of our country may remain there through the entire year with perfect safety. The diseases of all this region, I may add, have become very much modified of late, as any one at all familiar with the causes which produce them might upon the slightest observation perceive. An ordinary case of bilious fever seldom requires more than two or three days' treatment.

I have not, during a practice of more than five years in this vicinity, seen a case of intermittent or bilious fever which originated at Old Point. Yours, truly,

JESSE E. HOPE.

JOSEPH SEGAR, ESQ., Roseland.

NORFOLK, VA., August 25th, 1856.

DEAR SIR :—In regard to the health at Old Point, I have only to remark, that, having been familiar with the place ever since my boyhood, I speak confidently when I declare it to be among the healthiest spots on the continent of America. Bilious and ague fever are unknown there, while in all our epidemics it has escaped unharmed. I would sooner take my chance at Old Point to avoid those diseases in summer and fall than the mountains, or even at the White Sulphur. For eight years I resided in the vicinity of Old Point, and for the remainder of my life in Norfolk, and was thus afforded ample opportunity of ascertaining the fact in question. Since 1819, when the extensive public works were commenced, Old Point has contained quite a large population, made up of the military and persons connected with the Engineer Department, to say nothing of other citizens and visitors. These have enjoyed, at all seasons, an unexampled share of excellent health.

The United States Government has, on several occasions, sent troops to Old Point from other stations to recruit their health, and with the desired effect. What induced this was, doubtless, the favorable reports of the Army Surgeons as to the sanitary character of the place. We cannot account for tastes, nor can we control fashion; but it has always been a matter of surprise to me that visitors should leave the Point just at the time when it is most pleasant. The latter part of August and the whole of September are among the healthiest and most agreeable periods to remain at Old Point; for the air is bracing, and yet mild during the day, and at night you sleep comfortably under a blanket. Hog fish and oysters are of much finer flavor than in July, and the fishing far better than in the extreme heat of the summer. No one within the broad limits of the Old Dominion can have failed to appreciate the beauty of our Indian Summer (so called). This, while it endures some few weeks in other localities, lasts the whole fall at the Point, commencing about the 20th of August. I can give no stronger proof of the earnestness and sincerity of my convictions on this head, than by declaring that if the authorities would grant me permission to erect a cottage on the beach, I would gladly avail myself of the privilege with a view to residing there all summer and fall with my family. But I will not enlarge on this topic. There is, and there can be, no dispute on this subject, since all who know the place will endorse every word I have uttered. The health of Old Point, and its exemption from the fall diseases of our climate, are facts too well established to admit of cavil or doubt; indeed, to quote the words of a conspicuous politician, it is a "*fixed fact.*" Very respectfully,

F. MALLORY, M.D.

JOSEPH SEGAR, Hygeia Hotel.

NORFOLK, August 24th, 1856.

Joseph Segar, Esq.

DEAR SIR:—Having spent my school-boy days in the immediate vicinity of Old Point, and being somewhat familiar for many years with the hygienic condition of the people—residents and guests who annually assemble there—I am enabled to answer your inquiry with entire confidence in the correctness of my conclusions. This experience has satisfied me that no locality in our latitude can be more healthy. Unconnected with "the main," save by a narrow strip of beach land, which is only partially covered with a stunted vegetation; its sources everywhere washed by the salt ocean wave, and not a sunken spot where vegetable humus can gather—it seems to me utterly impossible that malaria can be generated there, or that noxious airs can reach it from any portion of the adjacent country. Come from whatever point of the compass the winds may, *they are sea breezes* still, and could scarcely waft a poisonous exhalation from the *distant* shores abroad.

In my estimation, fevers of a bilious, remittent, or intermittent type might as soon be expected to originate on the highest peak of the Blue Ridge as on the clean, barren sand plain on which the Hygeia Hotel is built.

Yours, truly,

J. J. SIMPKINS.

HAMPTON, VA., March 30th, 1857.

MY DEAR SIR:—I have received your letter requesting my opinion of the general healthiness of Old Point Comfort, and particularly as to its exemption from bilious diseases.

In reply to your inquiry, it gives me pleasure to state, that I know of no place in Virginia with which Old Point Comfort will not, in that respect, favorably compare; and I do not remember *ever to have seen a case of bilious fever which originated at that place.*

Yours, respectfully,

WILLIAM R. VAUGHAN, M.D.

JOSEPH SEGAR, ESQ., Roseland.

ALEXANDRIA, August 25th, 1856.

MY DEAR SIR:—In reply to yours of 20th instant, I can only say, that the healthiest spot I have ever known is Old Point Comfort; and this I say after a residence there of eight or nine years. A very mistaken notion prevails as to its health in August and the fall months, and there are persons who deem it unsafe to remain there at such times. My own experience teaches me that, for comfort and health, Old Point is far more desirable in August and the fall months than earlier. Fish and oysters are in greater perfection, and no climate can be purer, or more delightful, or healthier. At any season of the year, spring, summer, autumn, or winter, I would as soon take my chance for health there as at the White Sulphur Springs, or any watering-place in America.

Yours, very truly,

JAMES S. FRENCH.

JOSEPH SEGAR, ESQ., Roseland, Eliz. City Co., Va.

FORT MONROE, VA., June 17th, 1876.

MY DEAR SIR:—I hasten to reply to your favor of this date making inquiry "as to the healthiness of Old Point Comfort, and its sanitary advantages."

My knowledge of the subject is obtained from the statistical records of the post, extending back for many years, and from personal experience.

And first as to the general health of the place, it appears that the percentage of sickness is less than the average, as is also the percentage of the mortality to the number of the sick, and to the whole number of the population. Children of all ages thrive here. Epidemics of the diseases of children seldom prevail, and when prevalent, have almost invariably been mild in type.

Among the visitors during the summer, the number of cases of disease occurring has been very small, and the favorable hygienic surroundings have rendered them brief and easily influenced by treatment.

Nutritious and palatable food is abundant.

The temperature of the sea bathing is intermediate to the temperature of the New England watering places and those of the Gulf, and is therefore on some accounts preferable to either. During the summer months the ocean breezes almost constantly blow, for obtaining the full benefits of which the construction and exposure of the hotel are exceptionally happy.

From the above facts pleasure and health seekers may draw their own conclusions.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

JOSEPH R. SMITH,

Brevet Colonel and Surgeon, U. S. A.

H. PHOEBUS, ESQ., Hygeia Hotel.

HAMPTON, VA., June 17th, 1876.

MY DEAR SIR:—I reply with pleasure to your communication. Having practised medicine among the residents at Old Point Comfort and the visitors at the Hygeia Hotel for nearly thirty years, ever since the old Hygeia was built, except during the years of the war, and never having known a case of malarious fever to originate at the hotel, I am satisfied that visitors, come from what quarter they may, are as safe there during all the months of summer and autumn as at any mountain watering place. At this pleasant resort the healthy are made stronger, and the sickly and debilitated are invigorated by the salt sea breezes which constantly blow, from whatever point they come over the salt sea water, and by the delightful salt bath in the surf, at the very door of the hotel, more delightful than that of the watering places on the Gulf or those of the North, because cooler than the one and not so cold as the other; and for its sanitary effect in many cases superior to either. This is particularly applicable to children; even the little sufferers from the great dread of all mothers, the summer complaint, are generally restored as if by *magic*, and all, not past all hope of recovery, may expect to be benefited. Visitors from elevated and mountainous regions, suffering from bronchial and asthmatic affections, are uniformly benefited.

The present new "Hygeia" is far superior to the old hotel, both in location and construction. The former, a low and ill-constructed building, was situated immediately under the walls of the fort, by which and other obstructions the winds were cut off; the latter, elevated and admirably constructed for ventilation, stands on the most projecting point of the promontory, immediately on the water's edge, affording from its broad and shady porticoes and spacious pavilion a magnificent water view in every direction, and full scope for the winds.

Very respectfully, yours, &c.,

G. WILLIAM SEMPLE, M. D.

To H. PHOEBUS, ESQ., Hygeia Hotel.

The following pages, in connection with the map, will show the various routes to and from Old Point Comfort, Va.

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